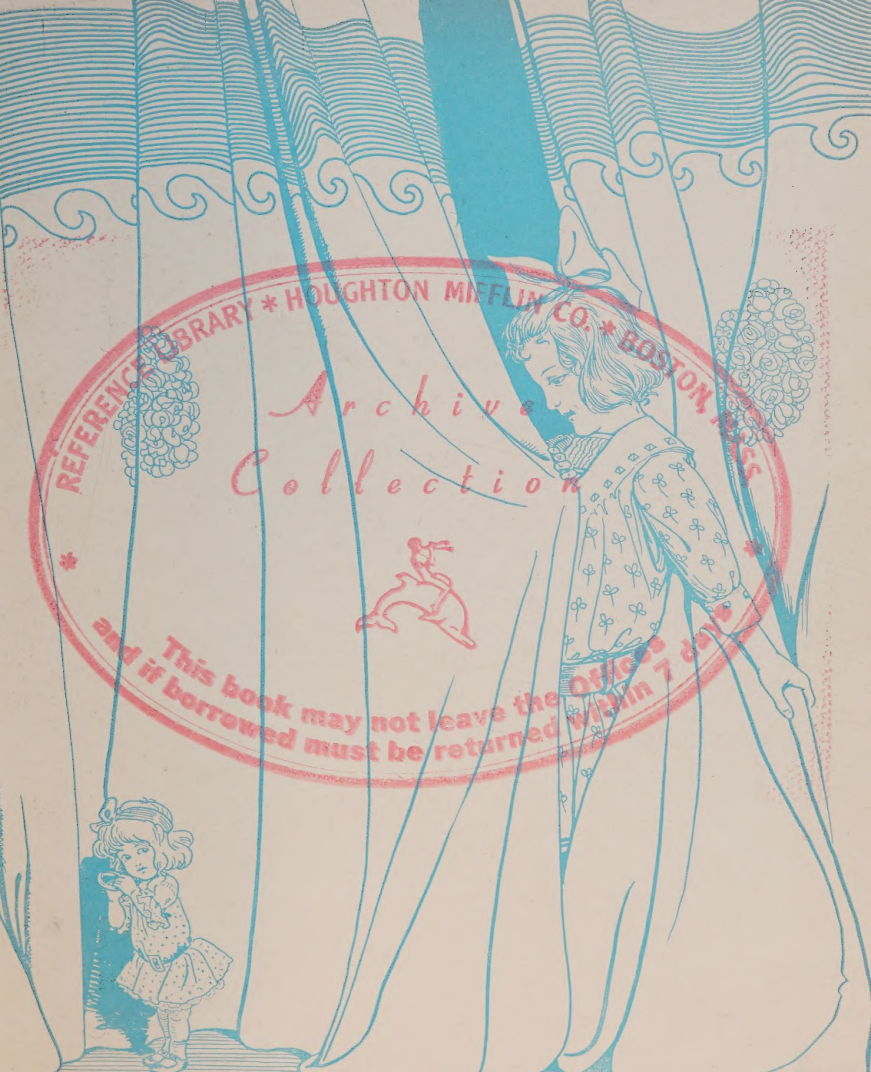
LITTLE GIRL BLUE

PLAYS "I SPY!"

JOSEPHINE SCRIBNER GATES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By Josephine Scribner Gates

LITTLE GIRL BLUE PLAYS "I SPY." Illustrated in color.

THE TURKEY DOLL. Illustrated in color

TOMMY SWEET-TOOTH AND LITTLE GIRL BLUE. Illustrated in color.

LITTLE GIRL BLUE. Illustrated in color.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

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BY

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ILLUSTRATED

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Little Girl Blue Plays "I Spy!"

LITTLE GIRL BLUE PLAYS "I SPY!"

SUCH wild excitement as there was when Alice, Little Girl Blue's mamma, lost the wedding ring!

And Little Girl Blue found it in such a funny place! You never could guess where, I am sure, so I am going to tell you all about it.

There was to be a wedding in the family, and Alice was to be all dressed in white, from the butterfly bow on top of her head down to the dainty stockings and slippers on her tiny feet.

And what *do* you suppose she was to do?

Such an exciting thing!

There was, of course, to be a procession, with all the bridesmaids, the maid of honor, and lastly, Sister, the

beautiful white bride. Alice was to be the ring-bearer; to walk at the head of the procession, carrying, in the heart of a water-lily, the circlet

of gold, the sacred symbol of the plighted vows.

Alice and her live dolly were filled with joy over the preparations

for this event. They had many times opened the tiny white box and gazed enraptured at the bit of gold glittering in its snowy bed.

Once Alice grew bold enough to slip it on to her finger, but, finding it much too large, she placed it on

Little Girl Blue's wrist, where it made a fine bracelet.

Thus did the ring often go back and forth, in and out of its resting-place.

Alice felt very important as she was at various times drilled in her part, and she tried very hard to do it perfectly.

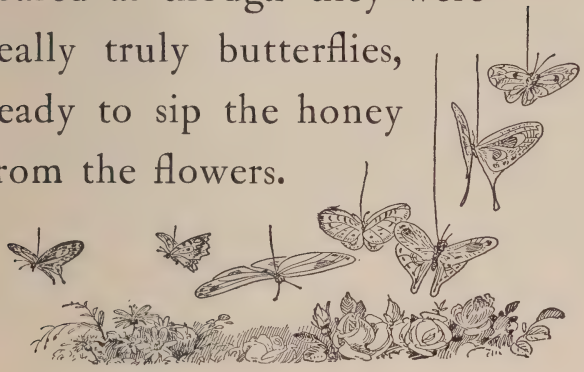
The day before *the* day, everybody was so busy that the child was left to herself to do as she pleased,

and she pleased to do a great many things.

With Little Girl Blue she wandered all over the house, which was transformed, it seemed, to her beauty-loving eyes, into fairyland, indeed.

Many artistically tinted paper butterflies, suspended from threads, seemed to be hovering over the masses of blossoms; swayed by each passing breeze they fluttered and

soared as though they were really truly butterflies, ready to sip the honey from the flowers.



After duly admiring the various rooms, Alice led the way to the guest-room.

Here, on the bed, lay all the bridal finery: the silken gown,

the shimmering veil, stockings, slippers, —

"Something old, and something new,
Something borrowed, and something blue,"

all complete, ready, waiting.

"See!" cried Alice. "Is n't it lovely! Let's peep through the veil and see how it seems. I never was married, were you?"

Little Girl Blue assured her that she never was, and in a twinkling both were shrouded in the filmy

stuff, gazing eagerly into the mirror.

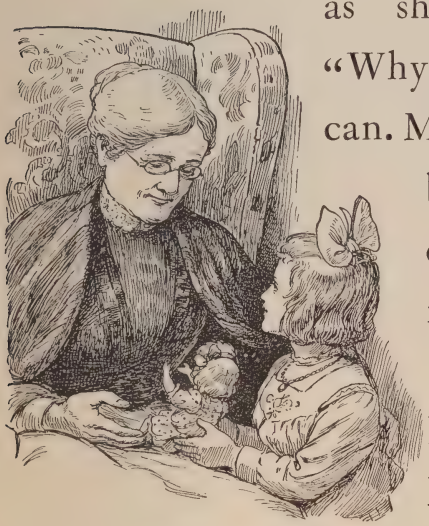
Suddenly a brilliant thought came to Alice, and she exclaimed: —

"I know what we will do! Let's dress you as a bride, too. Grandma knows how; she can make lovely things, and then you can be in the procession. Come on!"

The two scampered upstairs, and in breathless tones Alice asked

Grandma if she could make a bride of Little Girl Blue.

Grandma's dear old face beamed as she replied, "Why, of course I can. Many a dolly bride have I dressed in my day.



"You will have to do a little shop-

ping for me, though. I will give you a list of what I shall need."

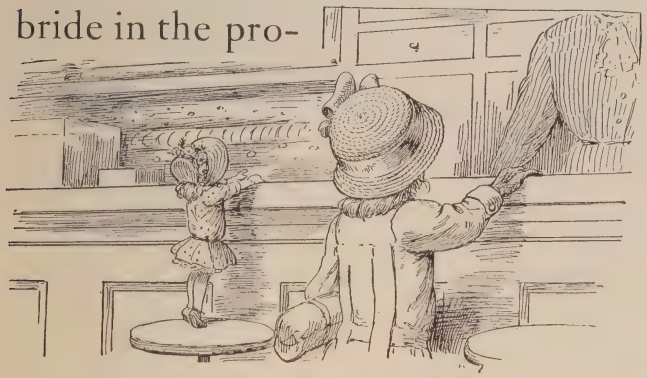
Soon they were on the way, and very important they felt as they bought a roll of sparkling white crêpe paper at the corner drug store, then went on to the milliner's near by.

A bell tinkled as they opened the door. At the counter Alice and the Little Girl Blue dolly stood on "tid-pie toes" while Alice eagerly inquired

if they kept bridal veils for dolls.

The lady looked wonderingly at Little Girl Blue as she asked if the doll were to be married.

"Not exactly," replied Alice, "but she's going to be a pretend bride in the pro-



cession. I 'm going to be in it, too, and it 's going to be awful 'citing!"

The lady smiled as she brought out a box of veiling, measured and cut a piece the proper length for the wee one.

"Now," she added, "she must have a few tiny posies for the neck of her gown and to fasten the veil to her curly locks. Let 's see what we can find."

Out came another box filled to

the brim with white flowers. In this she searched till finally she cried triumphantly, "Here's the very thing!" And she held up a spray of weenty-teenty white starry blossoms.

"Oh, how lovely!" cried Alice and the dolly in one breath.

When the precious treasures were safely wrapped in tissue paper the two hurried home as fast as their little fat legs could carry them.

Grandma dearly loved to dress dolls, and she joyously fashioned the pretty gown.

She carefully cut the paper into skirt lengths for the fluffy petticoats, and Alice fluted one edge to make the skirt stand out from the little feet. Here and there over the gown

were pasted the starry flowers which also encircled the white throat, thus forming a flowery necklace.

A broad sash with fringed ends was bound about the waist. The curly locks were knotted loosely and tied about with a bit of tinsel.

Then came the ecstatic moment when the veil was caught over the fluffy knot with a few of the blossoms.

Then Alice and her Grandma

stood off to admire their handiwork.

"Oh! Little Girl Blue," cried Alice, rapturously clasping her hands, "you do look so lovely!

Your dress glistens just as if we had sprinkled it with silver powder, and that gold cord around your hair looks like a crown shining through

your veil. Won't Sister be s'prised, Grandma?"

"Indeed, she will. A more beautiful bride it would be hard to find, with such a sparkling gown, filmy veil, tiny slippered feet peeping from beneath her fluttering skirts, and garlands of flowers on her arms. Well may we cry, 'Hail to the bride!'"

"But what am I to do while we wait for the wedding to-morrow?" anxiously cried the dolly bride.

"Must I just stand up still like this all night?"

"Bless you, no, my dear," replied Grandma. "We will take off this gown and put on your other one. To-morrow come to me early and I will dress you for the party."

Alice helped Grandma put away the bridal finery; then she and Little Girl Blue went below to see what had been happening during their absence.

"Let's look just once more in the little white box," whispered Alice, leading the way to the treasure; "after to-morrow we can never have it again, you know."

"Why?" queried Little Girl Blue.

"Well, I heard Sister say she would never take it off, so I s'pose it gets wished on.

"I wish you could have one, too! See how lovely it would look on your finger if it only was littler."

The two pairs of eyes were gazing eagerly at it when Alice cried:—

"Would n't it be a fine thing to play 'I spy' with? It 's better 'n a thimble. Come on, let 's play it awhile."

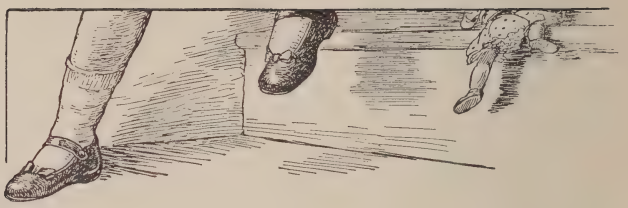
Then followed the merriest kind of a game, during which the ring gleamed from many an odd nook and corner, while the shrill cries of "I spy" echoed and reëchoed through the house.

When the various hiding-places had been exhausted, Alice proposed "But-

ton, button, who's got the button?" and the ring slipped in and out of the two pairs of clasped hands to the accompaniment of the murmured words, "Hold fast all I give you."

Back and forth it traveled, till finally, just as it was held close in the child's moist pink palms, she suddenly began to sniff.

"What's that smells so good, Little Girl Blue? I believe it's the wedding cake. Come on!"



In a twinkling two pairs of little feet clattered down to the kitchen, where they found cakes and cakes: loaf cakes, jelly cakes, chocolate cakes, angel food, cocoanut cakes; and most of them looked as though they had been making Jack Frost a visit.

Cook was piling them all away on the shelves, and Alice, much disappointed, cried: —

"Oh, dear, you are all through, and we so wanted to watch you."

"Well, you may," replied the good-natured maid, "for I have yet *the* cake to make."

"What 's that?" asked Alice.

"Why, don't you know? That 's the beautiful snowy bride's cake. I 'll make you a wee one."

Alice beamed over this news, and whispered to her companion, —

"That 's for you, Little Girl Blue. Is n't it fun, and she does n't even know it 's for a really truly pretend bride!"

Together they watched cook break the eggs, weigh the sugar, flour, and butter; then beat the creamy mass till it foamed and frothed to the top of the bowl.

"Light as a feather," she mur-

COOK
BOOK

mured. "Just wait one moment till I get a little more flour."

She vanished, and during that instant the deed was done — the ring was buried deep! deep! deep!

Alice was longing for a chance to poke her finger into the batter and taste it. As she yielded to the temptation, the ring, forgotten for the moment, dropped and sank out of sight, while Alice reveled in the stolen sweets.

"Come, taste it, too, Little Girl Blue; it 's lovely."

The doll needed no second invitation, and her wee finger was poked in and out and licked until cook again appeared.

"Here! here!" she cried; "this is bride's cake and not lady fingers. That is n't nice to do, but since you did it, I 'm glad your hands happened to be clean.

"Now we will bake the wee one."

Into the heart-shaped pan went a spoon full of the batter, and into the oven went the pan. All three waited breathlessly for the moment when it was taken out and pronounced perfect.

"We will leave it in the window," said cook.

"I 'll frost it when I frost the big one.

"Here 's the chocolate platter for you to lick while you wait."

Two pairs of eyes sparkled at this news, and they seated themselves in a corner with the big dish between them.

I do

not need to tell you of the good time that followed. If you have ever had that privilege you know what fun it is to dip and lick as did these two.

Of course bride's cakes and frosting platters blotted entirely from their minds the ring so calmly reposing in its bed of dough instead of velvet where it belonged.

The day wore on, and not once did they think of it.

Bedtime was hailed with delight, for it meant sleep, and then an awakening to *the* happy day.

Little Girl Blue slept in a cun-

ning brass bed beside her mamma, and the next morning when Alice opened her eyes she leaned over to

the dolly, and found that she, too, was wide awake.

"Is this the really truly wedding day?" asked the doll.

"Yes, it is, and we must get up. I 'm glad it 's such a pretty shiny day.

"We will wear our play clothes for a little while. Let 's see who 'll beat."

Such fun as they always had dressing together, and this morning

was no exception. They were just ready when the maid appeared with a tray, saying: —

"You are to have breakfast here. They are all eating in their rooms because we are fixing the dining-room for the wedding breakfast, and fine it looks, too. When you have finished, come down and take a peep."

She hurried away, while Alice, much pleased over this private tea-

party, set her small table with her gold-banded dishes.

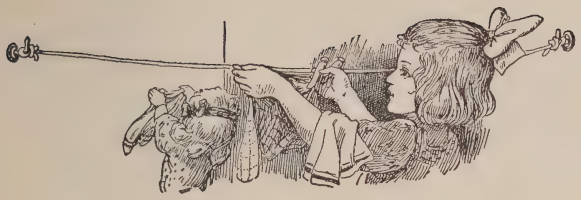
"I wish we had weddings often. We have much better times, I think, don't you?"

Little Girl Blue was sure they did, as they poured cocoa from the dear little cocoa-pot, ate toast and cream potatoes to their heart's content, then washed the dishes, and put them away.

I must tell you about her dish-

pan. It was the dearest little thing, blue and white, and there was a smaller one for a rinsing-pan. Alice had such a lovely place to play. One end of her room was arranged with her playthings just like a little house. Here were all of her toys, and here was stretched a line. On this she hung the tiny dish-towels, then piled the clean dishes away in a wee cupboard.

She had many tea-parties, and



the rule was always that the dishes must be well washed and dried and the tiny towels perfectly clean when hung up to dry.

If Mother ever found that any of these duties had been neglected the next tea-party did n't come off for a long, long time.

Little Girl Blue wiped the dishes which Alice washed, then together they put everything in order.

"Now it's ready for Mama to look and say 'yes' or 'no' for next time. I'm sure she will say 'yes.' So let's hurry to Grandma. You must get dressed, you know."

The doll bride was soon robed in the bridal gown. Then down to the dining-room they ran to view the table all ready for the great event.

"How pretty!" they both exclaimed, and indeed it was. Each table had some special color scheme carried out in flowers and ribbons, while butterflies, fluttering over the sweets displayed, added much to the beauty of the scene.

The bride's table was the prettiest, and here

the two paused for some time, fascinated by the exquisite decorations.

"See!" cried Alice, suddenly making a discovery. "We are to sit here with the bride. I can tell, for here's a chair with two books on it right in front of your dear little cake.

"You see I 'm not to have a high chair. I 'm glad people can see for once that I 'm a big girl.

"See Sister's cake, is n't it a beauty?

"Oh, Little Girl Blue, I know what would be the biggest s'prise for everybody, if you only will. You know they sometimes have white figures made for these cakes. I've seen them, but none so pretty as you. I'll stand you right in the middle, and then it will be a really truly bride's cake!"

No sooner said than done, and

in a twinkling the doll bride found herself standing on the snowy mound.

Alice pushed her feet down, down, into the yielding carpet, whispering, consolingly, —

"'T ain't very long now till the wedding. You won't mind having your feet buried, dear. The cake is so white it can't soil your slippers."

Little Girl Blue had been asked to do many strange things, but never

before had she posed for an ornament on a bride's cake.

"You look just too good to be true!" exclaimed Alice, admiringly. "I hope they won't make a mistake and eat you, too."

"There's Mama calling me to come and

be dressed. You stay here. I'll be back soon."

Away she flew, leaving Little Girl Blue all alone in the darkened room, with her two feet stuck so tight in the cake she could n't walk away if she wanted to; she could only just wriggle her toes a little.

Here she waited until the impor-

tant moment arrived. She knew when that was, for she could hear the hushed voices of the guests and sweet strains of music.

Meantime Alice was dressed and at once called to her place at the head of a line of dewy-eyed girls, looking like a bunch of rosebuds

in their dainty pink gowns. Back of them stood the bride in all her white purity.

Alice, much excited now that the eventful moment had arrived, carried in her hand the water-lily from which peeped the wee white box.

As she awaited the moment for the music to sound the signal for her to march, she heard a voice whispering, "Take the ring from the box, dear."

She opened the box and gazed in horror at its emptiness.

"Where is it?" she cried.

"Where is it?" gasped the maid of honor.

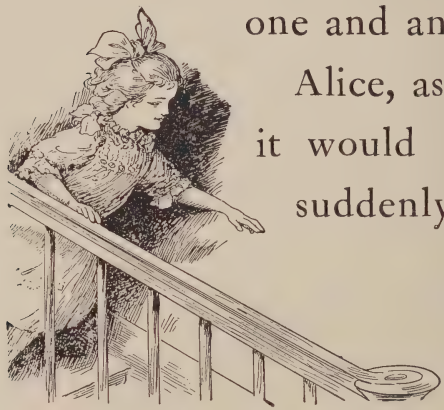
"Where is it?" echoed the six bridesmaids in chorus.

"Where is it?" wailed the bride.

At once the frantic search began.

"Tell the musicians to wait, was breathed in frightened tones over the banisters.

"Perhaps it rolled under the dresser, or is in the drawer," cried one and another.



Alice, assured that it would be found, suddenly remembered that she

wanted Little Girl Blue to walk in the procession.

She raced down the back stairway into the dining-room, hastily pulled the doll from her place, and hurried back to find the search still in progress.

"Can't wait any longer, little bride," declared Father.

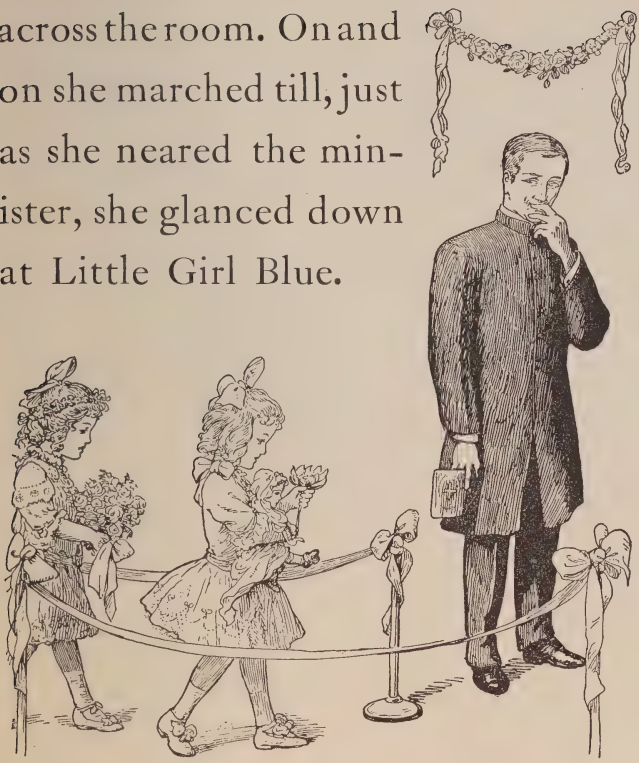
"Use mine, dear, it will make it more precious," whispered Mother, placing it in the water-lily.

Now came sweet strains of music, "The Wedding March," and Alice started, her gaze riveted on the worn golden circlet embedded in the flower.

Slowly she marched down the stairway, holding the lily cup in one hand, and with the other clasping Little Girl Blue to her bosom.

She reached the lower hall, and passed through the narrow aisle formed by the ribbons stretched

across the room. On and on she marched till, just as she neared the minister, she glanced down at Little Girl Blue.



One slippered foot was sticking straight up in the air, and what *do* you s'pose she saw?

On the end of that tiny foot shone the lost wedding ring!

In a flash she knew how it happened. She remembered having the ring clasped in her hands just as it had slipped from Little Girl Blue's hands when they were playing, "Hold fast all I give you." Of course, she forgot in the joy of dip-

ping her finger in and out of the fluffy mass of dough, and the ring fell in and was baked.

Then when the doll's feet were thrust into the cake, one foot happened to tip itself right into the ring, and here it was!

A stifled giggle startled the wedding guests as Little Girl Blue also saw the ring, and the sight so much astonished her she cried

aloud in her shrill, piping voice, —

"I spy! It 's on my foot!"

"Hush," whispered the wee maiden, much abashed at the wonder expressed on the faces of those about her.

"Let it stay there, and be good."

She halted now near the minister. With wide-open eyes she watched, and not one detail did she miss of all that followed.

She was very much impressed by

the ceremony. So much so, indeed, that when the minister asked for the ring, instead of offering him the lily, she poked the tiny doll foot up at him.

Once more stifled laughter echoed through the room; this time the guests were at fault, for they, too, spied the ring just as the minister did, and it seemed a very

funny thing for the minister to take it from the end of a doll's slippered foot.

This odd interruption served one good purpose at least: those who had been thinking about weeping a tiny weep, decided to laugh, so they had a merry wedding. Little Girl Blue was the heroine of the day, and the despoiled cake was only the dearer because it had for a time taken such good care of the wedding ring.

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